

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1 - 53. (Cancelled)

54. (New) A process for the preparation of black amorphous silicon particles, comprising:

reducing a halosilane, organohalosilane, or hexafluorosilicate salt with a metal of Group I or II of the periodic table, said reducing taking place in a solvent which consists of one or more apolar organic solvents,

wherein the amorphous silicon consists of elemental silicon.

55. (New) The process of claim 54, wherein the solvent which consists of one or more apolar organic solvents contains at least one of toluene and xylene.

56. (New) The process of claim 55, wherein a hexafluorosilicate salt is reduced.

57. (New) The process of claim 54, wherein silicon tetrafluoride or silicon tetrachloride is reduced by sodium metal in a solvent consisting of one or more of toluene and xylene.

58. (New) The process of claim 54, wherein sodium metal is employed as a reducing agent, and wherein the step of reducing takes place above the melting point of sodium and below the boiling point of xylene.

59. (New) The process of claim 1, further comprising freeing the black amorphous silicon particles from impurities by washing with liquid ammonia to obtain particles

coated with ammonia, separating the particles from the liquid ammonia, and heating the particles to remove the coating of ammonia.

60. (New) The process of claim 54, wherein tetrachlorosilane is reduced with sodium metal in an apolar organic solvent, wherein the solvent consists of toluene or xylene.